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November 13, 2014

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael Antonovich

FROM: Sachi A. Hamai
Executive Officer
Executive Office Board of Supervisors

Lisa M. Garrett
Director of Personnel
Department of Human Resources

SUBJECT: **REPORT FROM STRIKE TEAM MONITORING THE LOS ANGELES
COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE FIGHTER TRAINEE EXAM
(REPORT NUMBER 1)**

BACKGROUND OF STRIKE TEAM

On November 5, 2014 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to create a "Strike Team" of monitors to oversee the administration of the entry-level Fire Fighter Trainee examination for the Los Angeles County Fire Department. The Strike Team of monitors was also supported by Fire Chief Osby and the Fire Fighter's Labor Union, Local 1014.

The Board adopted implementation of the Strike Team following an investigation by the Los Angeles Times into allegations of nepotism in the fire fighter hiring processes of the Department. The investigation also looked into allegations that Department insiders manipulated hiring lists and that test examination questions and answers circulated freely in the Department's station houses thereby benefiting the relatives of fire fighters in the hiring process.

STRIKE TEAM OBJECTIVES

The Strike Team will oversee the administration of the entry-level Firefighter Trainee examination to ensure fairness, objectivity, transparency and security in all aspects of the examination process and urgency. Further, it will ensure all eligible candidates receive equal employment opportunity in the examination process. Finally, the Strike Team will monitor department recruitment to ensure it attracts high-quality eligible candidates without bias from a wide variety of backgrounds including women and ethnic minorities. The Strike Team will report weekly to the Board on the objectives listed above.

MEMBERS OF THE STRIKE TEAM INCLUDE

A representative from the following entities will comprise the Strike Team: the Los Angeles County Fire Department, the Department of Human Resources, the Office of the Executive Director of the County Equity Oversight Panel, the Office of the County Counsel, and Fire Fighter's Labor Union, Local 1014.

ATTACHMENTS

The Fire Department submitted the attached documents to the Strike Team to demonstrate the work done to date concerning recruitment and outreach to eligible candidates and examination development. The documents attached include the following: (1) The first document entitled, "Fire Fighter Trainee (FFT) Examination 2014" is a chronological status of the Department's efforts associated with the development of the FFT Examination to date; and (2) the second document contains a list of entities the Fire Department anticipates contacting to announce the opening of the FFT examination.

REPORT BACK

The Strike Team will review these documents over the course of this next week and Report back to the Board concerning their review.

If you have any questions please call either Sachi Hamai at x41401, Lisa Garrett at x42406 or Mary Wickham at x49868.

SAH:LMG:ga

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka
Mark J. Saladino

Fire Fighter Trainee Exam Notification

The Board of Supervisors
Board Office Fire Deputies
Board Office Press Deputies
Chief Executive Office/Office of Public Affairs
Mayors and City Councilmembers
City Managers
Town Council Representatives for unincorporated areas
Public Safety Commissioners
City Public Information Officers
School District Superintendents
Local High Schools
Local Businesses
Chambers of Commerce
Civic Organizations and Service Clubs
Other Local Community-based Organizations
CERT-Trained Individuals
Regional and Local Media Outlets/Print and Broadcast
Fire Service Trade Media Outlets/Print and Broadcast
Ethnic Media Outlets in the Region
News Bureaus (City News, Associated Press, UPI, Reuters, etc.)

FIRE FIGHTER TRAINEE (FFT) EXAMINATION 2014

- Since July 2011, the Fire Department's (Department) Recruitment Unit has been staffed by a female Fire Fighter Specialist whose primary function was to conduct public outreach and encourage all members of the public, with specific interest towards women, to join the fire service through the Los Angeles County Fire Department. To date, the Department has added a Fire Captain to the Recruitment Unit to expand and enhance outreach.
- Since at least April 2012, the Department has been working closely and collaboratively with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to develop the examination with an emphasis placed on objectivity, security of examination materials and validated core competencies of a firefighter, such as Emergency Medical Services. DHR was contracted to assist the Department in recruiting a high caliber and diverse FFT, provide a job analysis and test research, and provide technical oversight of the chosen contractor. This would ensure accountability, delivery of high-quality services that are defensible and an examination that would meet professional and technical standards. This collaboration included the statement of work that would be used in the Request for Proposal (RFP), and evaluation of the vendors.
- Beginning in November 2012, the Department created an essential internal stakeholder group comprised of a newly developed Women's Commission, the Bomberos, the Stentorians, and Local 1014 to develop strategies that would encourage and prepare a diverse applicant pool for the upcoming examination. Stakeholders also provided critical input on key characteristics of a successful firefighter. Stakeholder feedback was taken into consideration and integrated, as appropriate, into the newly created examination.
- In April 2013, the Department met with the City of Los Angeles to discuss the pros and cons of the processes that they used in their entry level examination.
- In 2013, the Department continued to meet with stakeholders to develop and implement ideas that would assist in the efforts to promote a diverse group of candidates. This included the highly successful Fire Fighter Trainee Seminar.
- As provided to your Board on December 31, 2013, the Department introduced a Mentoring Program to prospective firefighter candidates beginning January 1, 2014. The Mentoring Program served to introduce individuals who are considering a career in the fire service. Prospective firefighter candidates were mentored by fire series personnel who volunteered their on-duty time to give individualized attention to candidates in the community where they serve.

Moreover, the candidates were: 1) introduced to the essential components of the hiring process; 2) participated in station activities including, short-ride-a-longs; and 3) introduced to the policies and procedures specific to the Department.

- As provided to your Board on January 3, 2014, the Department initiated Firefighter Trainee Seminars throughout the County of Los Angeles (Pomona, Carson, Lancaster and La Habra) as a means to educate all interested members of the public on what is required to be a FFT, as well as, how to apply for the examination. To date, over 2,300 members of the public participated in these seminars. Prior to implementation of these seminars, DHR was consulted.
- Since January 2014, the recruitment unit has been tracking and mentoring approximately 600 members of the public, approximately 450 are women who have shown interest in becoming a FFT. In addition since February 2014, the Department has received approximately 8,000 interest cards from members of the public.
- In January 2014, the RFP was released.
- In January 2014, DHR began a Job Analysis to validate the examination that will be utilized.
- On June 17, 2014, your Board authorized the Department to retain consultant PSI Services LLC to assist in the development of the new FFT Examination. The Department and DHR began weekly meetings on July 10, 2014, with PSI to discuss all aspects of the examination process.
- Recently the Department and DHR met with the Office of the County Counsel to ensure legal/risk related vulnerabilities were identified and addressed.
- It is anticipated that the new FFT examination is expected to be open for filing by the end of this year.
- The examination will be open/competitive and the bulletin will be released to the public ten (10) days prior to accepting applications.
- The filing period will be two (2) weekdays (48 hours). Up to 20,000 applicants are expected.
- A study guide for candidates has been prepared by the vendor.

- It is anticipated that the examination will be comprised of three components a non-cognitive component, a cognitive component and a structured interview component.
- As referenced above the Department will continue to meet weekly with PSI Services LLC toward final development and ultimate administration of the FFT examination.